



NOTTINGHAMSHIRE
Fire & Rescue Service
Creating Safer Communities

Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham
Fire and Rescue Authority

UNPAID SPECIAL LEAVE

Report of the Chief Fire Officer

Agenda No:

Date: 22 February 2008

Purpose of Report:

To make Members aware and seek approval of the Nottinghamshire and City of Nottingham Fire and Rescue Authority for a firefighter requesting a career break for a period of twelve months

CONTACT OFFICER

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1. BACKGROUND

A firefighter based at Mansfield Fire Station has requested a twelve month career break to enable them to visit deprived and developing regions of the world, and to become actively involved in voluntary projects. It is the intention to commence this career break with effect from 1 April 2008, last day of duty being 31 March 2008. Notice of the proposed break was provided on 15 January, 2008.

2. REPORT

- 2.1 In line with Section D5 of the Personnel Handbook, the Chief Fire Officer is authorised to agree all cases of unpaid leave up to a period of four weeks, where the period concerned exceeds four weeks, approval of the Fire & Rescue Authority is required.
- 2.2 To meet the provisions of paid leave, the request would have to be for compassionate reasons, such as personal or family reasons. In this case, the period of absence is not of a personal or domestic nature and it is recommended that leave is on the basis of unpaid special leave.
- 2.3 Upon the completion of the proposed voluntary work, it is the intention of the firefighter to return to their role with Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service on 1 April 2009.
- 2.4 Relevant management approval has been sought and it has been confirmed that release of the firefighter would have very little impact on the Service, as the period of leave could be managed within existing establishment levels. However, it would need to be recognised that when they returned to the Service after a break of one year, they would be required to undertake a return to work process before being able to return to full operational duty. It is anticipated this would take between two and four weeks to complete before being fully operational and able to ride appliances.
- 2.5 Full consultation on this matter has been undertaken with the Chair of the Human Resources Committee, who supports the request for a career break for a period of twelve months, subject to a report being presented to the Authority.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Other than the re-familiarisation costs incurred on a return to work following the break, there are no financial implications arising from this report.
- 3.2 Whilst the firefighter's employment would be suspended during the period of unpaid leave of absence, they would retain continuity of service. As such they would still remain a member of the Firefighter Pension Scheme and would be given the option to continue to pay their 11% pension contribution (plus the extra amount paid by the Authority).

4. HUMAN RESOURCES AND LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Whilst the firefighter's employment would be suspended during the period of unpaid leave of absence, they would retain continuity of service. Contact would need to be maintained throughout the period of leave and confirmation provided towards the end of the leave period that the agreed return to work date is adhered to.
- 4.2 On return to the Service, the firefighter will be required to undertake a full return to work programme and medical to confirm their fitness and operational readiness for the role of firefighter.

5. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

An initial impact assessment is attached as Appendix A to this report.

6. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

There are no crime and disorder implications arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Release of the firefighter would have very little impact on the Service, as the period of leave could be managed within existing establishment levels. There are currently no other members of the service on unpaid special leave. On this basis, there would be no risk management implications to be considered.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members to note the contents of this report and for approval to be given to the requested period of unpaid leave in line with the provisions of Section D5 of the Personnel Handbook.

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR INSPECTION (OTHER THAN PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS)

None.

Frank Swann
CHIEF FIRE OFFICER

INITIAL EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Section	Manager	Date of Assessment	New or Existing
HR DEPARTMENT	NICK LINTHWAITE	22 JANUARY 2008	EXISTING
Name of Policy/Service/Procedure to be assessed		UNPAID SPECIAL LEAVE APPLICATION	
1. Briefly describe the aims, objectives and purpose of the Report		To seek authorisation from the Fire Authority of a request from a firefighter for a 12 month period of unpaid leave of absence	
2. Who is intended to benefit from this policy and what are the outcomes?		The Service operates an open and equal approach to requests of unpaid leave of absence in line with the provisions of Section D5 of the Personnel Handbook.	
3. Who are the main stakeholders in relation to the Report?		Fire & Rescue Authority, SMT, HR, Representative Bodies and Employees	
4. Who implements and who is responsible for the Report?		Human Resources	

5. Please identify the differential impact in the terms of the six strands below. Please tick yes if you have identified any differential impacts. Please state evidence of negative or positive impacts below.

STRAND	Y	N	NEGATIVE IMPACT	POSITIVE IMPACT				
Race		x						
Gender		x						
Disability		x						
Religion or Belief		x						
Sexuality		x						
Age		x						
6. Can this adverse impact be justified on the grounds of promoting equality of opportunity for one group?			Y	N	7. Should the policy/service proceed to a full impact assessment?		Y	N
								x

I am satisfied that this policy has been successfully impact assessed. I understand the impact assessment of this report is a statutory obligation and that, as owners of this policy, we take responsibility for the completion and quality of this process.

Signed (completing person) Karen Jennings

Date 22/01/08

Signed (Head of Section) Nick Linthwaite

Date 22/01/08